



FOR THE
RECORD

Testimony before the Housing Committee of the Connecticut Legislature
Alberta Witherspoon, Publicly-assisted Housing Resident Network, PHRN,
in Opposition to Senate Bill 190
March 8, 2012

My name is Alberta Witherspoon. I live at 358 Orange Street in New Haven, Connecticut, a federal public housing complex. I am a board member of PHRN and I am speaking today on behalf of our members.

We had a bedbug infestation problem at my previous address, 90 Park Street (George Crawford Manor), which is owned and managed by the Housing Authority of New Haven. My 2 grandchildren were staying with me at the time. Numerous bites suddenly appeared on my body and the bodies of my two grandchildren. I did not know where they were coming from. My grandchild spotted 2 small bugs on my bed which I captured and took to the health department. The next day they called to inform me they were bedbugs. I then informed the housing authority about the health department's findings. I also discovered several other residents had similar bites on their bodies.

I then contacted the state health department. Officials there agreed to investigate the problem if the housing authority did not address it. I then requested another place to live from the housing authority until the problem in my apartment was cleared up and the problem in the other infested apartments was cleared up also. The housing authority did not respond to that request so I held a press conference to bring the problem to the public. Then the housing authority acted on the problem by treating the infected apartments. They removed the infected furniture from the apartments. Initially, they only treated mattresses and then placed them back in the apartments. When folks continued to get bitten I notified the housing authority that the problem still existed. I told them that they needed to come back and replace the mattresses and box springs. They did that. However, the housing authority did not reimburse the other residents for other furniture and clothing that was lost due to the infestation.

At George Crawford Manor all of the residents are on a fixed income. So not only could they not afford to replace their lost items, they certainly cannot afford to pay for treatments to eliminate bedbugs. It is for this reason that I urge you to reject Senate Bill 190. Thank you

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